

Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

The sanctification of the Sunday includes two distinct obligations, that of rest and that of divine worship ; in other words, to sanctify the Lord s day we must (1) abstain from servile work, and (2) exercise ourselves in works of religion.

We will now explain the obligation which refers to labour.

Labour is forbidden on Sunday, because it would thwart that worship which God exacts on that day, and because, continued without interruption, it would be injurious even to man's bodily well-being. God has commanded man to observe this holy rest for the welfare of both his body and soul.

The law of rest prohibits servile works, but not those which are known as liberal and common works.

1. By servile works we mean those which are exercised principally by the body and with regard to its interests. Such are the works of mechanics, tradesmen, the various manufacturers, farmers, and those who work with the needle and other implements, even though they should not receive even the least recompense for their labour.

They are not only guilty of sin who work, but also those who require their employees to work, or who permit those under their control to work. They are as guilty as if they themselves worked, and moreover are guilty of the sins of those whom they compel to labour, and of the scandal which they cause.

Besides servile works, the Church also forbids court proceedings, public sales, the displaying of goods, etc.

2. Common works are those which relate to daily necessities and to domestic duties. These are not prohibited any more than travelling, provided they do not expose us to the danger of missing Mass without reason.

Liberal works likewise permissible are those which require more the exercise of the mind than the body, and which directly tend to our mental improvement : as reading, writing, teaching, drawing, study, and all that belongs to the liberal arts.

The rest of Sunday is obligatory from one midnight to the next; consequently we sin by continuing to work after midnight on Saturday. Those who without a grave reason or necessity work for a considerable time for example, several hours, consecutive or otherwise are guilty of mortal sin.

There are, however, causes which render licit labour on the Sunday; among others, (1) necessity, as in the case of a fire or inundation; (2) dispensation which is granted for proper reasons for instance, to gather in the harvest when threatened with destruction by unfavourable weather.

Would you have the blessing of God, my brethren, even in your temporal affairs, then faithfully observe the rest of the Sabbath.

Recent - Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2185 On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are to **refrain from engaging in work** or activities that hinder the worship owed to God, the joy proper to the Lord's Day, the performance of the works of mercy, and the appropriate relaxation of mind and body.

Code of Canon Law: 1247 On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Mass.

Moreover, they are to **abstain from those works** and affairs which hinder the worship to be rendered to God, the joy proper to the Lord's day, or the suitable relaxation of mind and body.

### **This requirement is rooted in the 10 Commandments**

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2168 The third commandment of the Decalogue recalls the holiness of the sabbath: "The seventh day is a sabbath of **solemn rest**, holy to the LORD."

2184 Just as God "rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done," human life has a rhythm of work and rest.

**Some circumstances can excuse from the requirement to rest.** Catechism: Family needs or important social service can legitimately excuse from the obligation of Sunday rest. The faithful should see to it that legitimate excuses do not lead to habits prejudicial to religion, family life, and health.

I know, has said a man of God, two most certain means of becoming poor: to steal and to work on Sunday. There is no other precept which God has so forcibly urged as the sanctification of the Sabbath. He has ratified and confirmed it not only by words, but by severe chastisements. They have, says He, violated my Sabbaths: and I said, therefore, that I would pour out my indignation upon them (Ezek. xx. 13).

And why has He attached to it so great importance?

Because when this precept is observed all the others will be observed.